

# Putting Emotionally Unstable Patients on Psychedelic Trips: Mental Health "Treatment" or Human Rights Abuse?

*Putting patients' sanity at risk of unpredictable and dangerous effects of psychedelics is a last-ditch attempt to salvage the failing field of psychiatry.*

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Psychiatrists may see the use of psychedelic drugs like LSD ("acid") and psilocybin ("magic mushrooms") as a new frontier in mental health treatment, but the Citizens Commission on Human Rights views it as nothing more than a continuation of psychiatry's failed but relentless insistence on drugging bodies and brains instead of understanding and healing minds.



LSD and other psychedelics cause a disconnection from reality and hallucinations.

Worse still, it opens the door to a return to the human rights abuses long associated with these drugs.

“

It seems apt that there is now an outburst of resentment against some chemicals which can rapidly throw a man either into heaven or hell.”

*Psychiatrists Humphry Osmond and Abram Hoffer, after LSD outlawed in 1968*

Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy comes as the proposed answer to what one psychedelics researcher aptly called the triple crisis in psychiatry: the lack of validity in psychiatric diagnosis, the lack of understanding of the cause or development of mental disorders, and a halt in the research and development of the psychotropic drugs that are psychiatry's mode of treatment.

Mind-endangering psychedelic “trips” are being characterized as breakthrough mental health treatment for

psychiatry's failures, especially so-called “treatment-resistant” depression and other mental

disorders, for which existing psychotropic drugs and psychotherapy have not worked.

Further motivating the psychopharmaceutical industry's push towards psychedelics is the profit potential, which biotech analysts say could reach \$10 billion in annual sales with "treatment-resistant" patients, and much more if psychedelics eventually replace current antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs.

Psychiatrists, who for decades have routinely prescribed their patients mind-altering psychotropic drugs that have proven to be ineffective in mental healing, while causing patients to suffer many harmful and even life-threatening side effects, would administer the unpredictable psychedelic drugs under conditions not yet determined.



Present-day psychedelic researchers have downplayed the adverse effects of psychedelics, but the mental health hazards of the drugs are considerable.

Psychedelics are hallucinogens, a class of drugs that cause hallucinations – profound distortions in a person's perceptions of reality, which can be accompanied by impaired judgment, anxiety, depression, and extreme mood changes including psychosis.

The greatest risk is the overwhelming psychological distress known as a "bad trip," characterized by fear, panic, paranoia, and terrifying thoughts that can escalate to erratic and dangerous behavior, including aggression against self or others, according to one psychedelics researcher.

Psychedelic drug effects can be long-lasting, including spontaneously recurring hallucinations, commonly called "flashbacks," and even persistent psychoses, such as schizophrenia or severe depression. The [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) (NIDA) notes that while long-lasting effects are still considered rare, their occurrence "is unpredictable and may happen more often than previously thought" and "can happen to anyone, even after a single exposure."

Experimentation with psychedelics began in the 1950s, when psychiatrists tested LSD and mescaline as "treatment" for alcoholism and mental disorders. Experiments were done primarily on subjects from prisons or mental institutions, who were predominantly people of color.

Studies often used frequent or prolonged dosing. In one study at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Addiction Research Center in Kentucky, drug-addicted African Americans were given LSD in an experiment that kept some hallucinating for 77 consecutive days.

In the 1960s, psychedelics became available as street drugs, widely used by hippies in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. In particular, the abuse of LSD and the growing awareness of the dangerous and sometimes long-term damage from it led the U.S. government to finally outlaw LSD in 1968.

In response to the ban, two leading proponents of LSD experimentation, Canadian psychiatrists Humphry Osmond and Abram Hoffer, commented “it seems apt that there is now an outburst of resentment against some chemicals which can rapidly throw a man either into heaven or hell.”

U.S. intelligence agencies’ interest in LSD began soon after the end of World War II, when it was thought that the USSR was experimenting with drugs and hypnosis for interrogation and mind control. Knowing that the Nazis had conducted experiments with the psychedelic mescaline (peyote) at the Dachau concentration camp, the CIA became interested in learning whether mescaline could be used for mind control and hired Nazi doctors to advise them.

Only in the 1970s was the extent of the U.S. intelligence community’s experimentation with psychedelics revealed. At a Congressional hearing in 1977, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency testified that the CIA had covertly funded mind-control experiments using LSD and other drugs at 80 institutions, including 44 colleges and universities, from 1953 to 1973.

Under the CIA’s top-secret [MK-Ultra program](#), more than 150 clandestine human experiments were conducted to assess the usefulness of psychedelic drugs, hypnosis and electroshock for mind control, interrogation, and psychological torture. The CIA eventually concluded that the effects of LSD were too unpredictable. After the program came to light, Congress shut it down.

This should have marked the end of the use of psychedelics, with their unpredictable, mind-bending properties and the ease with which they can be used to perpetrate human rights abuses. Yet today, researchers are studying the use of LSD, psilocybin, MDMA (Ecstasy) and other psychedelics as “treatment” for emotionally unstable, mental health patients.

More drugging is psychiatry’s unsurprising answer to its identity crisis – putting human lives and sanity at risk of the unpredictable and dangerous effects of psychedelics in an attempt to salvage their failing industry. As a mental health industry watchdog, CCHR will continue to warn the public about these risks.

CCHR was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, M.D., to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health. Since then, CCHR has helped obtain more than 180 laws that protect mental

health patients.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured 441 major cities worldwide and educated over 800,000 people on the history of abusive psychiatric practices up to the present time, has been displayed in Washington, DC, at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Caucus and other locations.

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